

Exhibit 23

News

T.D. Jakes Disparaged in False and Unfounded Rumors Alongside 'Diddy' Sex-Abuse Allegations

TikTok and YouTube users promoted evidence-free rumors about Jakes. Some of those users' videos were at least partially created with AI.

By **Jordan Liles**

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Image courtesy of Getty Images



Beginning in April 2024, online users promoted a rumor in videos on TikTok and YouTube claiming Bishop T.D. Jakes, 66, resigned from his **senior pastor** role at The Potter's House megachurch in Dallas. According to the videos, Jakes' purported resignation related to sex-abuse allegations against rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs.

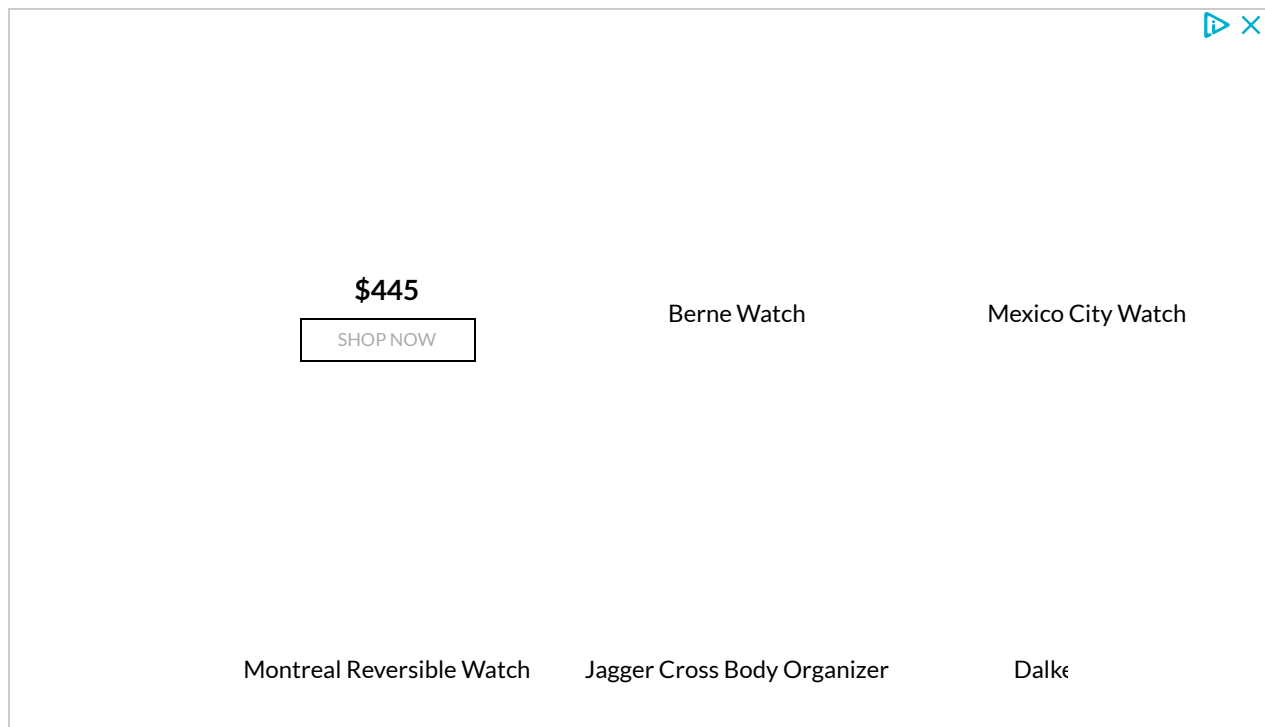
However, Jakes did not step down from his church. The users who created, commented on and shared videos about this rumor promoted misinformation. Jakes participated in Sunday services at The Potter's House Church as recently as **May 12** — weeks after the resignation rumor began circulating — according to footage of the services available on the church's **website** and **YouTube channel**.

This false rumor was simply the latest chapter in a months-old series of videos — many at least partially created with the assistance of artificial-intelligence tools — promoting unfounded rumors claiming Combs hosted "sex parties" in which Jakes participated.

Snopes contacted The Potter's House by email to ask about the rumors. A spokesperson for Jakes directed us to past statements explaining the various facets of these false and unfounded rumors.

Rumors About Jakes and Combs

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On March 25, 2024, **The Associated Press** reported federal Homeland Security Investigations agents and other law-enforcement officers had, hours earlier, searched Combs' properties in Los Angeles and Miami as part of an ongoing federal sex-trafficking investigation conducted from New York. Authorities have not charged Combs in this matter. According to **The New York Times**, Combs also faces several civil sexual assault lawsuits from four women accusing him of rape and a man accusing him of unwanted sexual contact.

In a statement posted to **Instagram** in December 2023, Combs responded to what he called "sickening allegations" against him and said, "Let me be absolutely clear: I did not do any of the awful things being alleged. I will fight for my name, my family and for the truth."

TikTok and YouTube users have mentioned Jakes' name in various unfounded rumors alongside Combs' allegations, all based on three pieces of information: Jakes' appearance in a video at one of Combs' birthday parties,

an evidence-free report originating from a TikTok user about Jakes' purported participation in "sex parties" hosted by Combs, and a passing mention of Jakes' name in a lawsuit involving Combs.

Jakes' Appearance at Combs' Birthday Party

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The first piece of information regarding the unfounded rumors about Jakes regards his appearance in a **video** purportedly recorded at Combs' 53rd birthday party in November 2022. The video simply shows Jakes in an outdoor setting during the daytime singing "Happy Birthday" into a camera operated by an unidentified person.

A second **video** shared with these same rumors shows Jakes and Combs posing together at an unknown event, also in an outdoor setting during the daytime.

Derrick Williams, executive vice president of T.D. Jakes Entertainment, told **The Christian Post** in December 2023 Jakes made "a quick appearance" at Combs' party because he "was in LA for important business meetings" and

wanted to drop by out of "respect" for the fact Jakes' sermons aired on the Revolt TV network, which Combs co-founded. This context regarding Jakes' relationship with Revolt TV was missing from videos promoting the unfounded rumors.

TikTok User Promotes 'Sex Parties' Rumor

The second piece of information regarding the unfounded rumors concerned an evidence-free claim by a **TikTok user** who said Jakes participated in alleged "sex parties" hosted by Combs. The Christian Post's article called the claim an "unverified report." Further, the TikTok user used the words "alleged" and "allegedly" multiple times and ended the clip with the words "if this is true."

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According to The Christian Post, Jakes appeared to respond to the claims during a Christmas Eve service at his church. "I'm not going to let the rain stop me. I'm not going to let the weather stop me. And I'm sure not going to let the liars stop me," Jakes said.

Jordan A. Hora, a spokesperson for T.D. Jakes Group and T.D. Jakes Ministries, also told The Christian Post of the rumor, "Recent claims circulating on pockets of social media about Bishop T.D. Jakes are unequivocally false and baseless."

Hora added, "What has always been true, in the **words** of the late Pastor Charles H. Spurgeon, 'If you want the truth to go round the world you must hire an express train to pull it; but if you want a lie to go round the world it will fly; it is as light as a feather, and a breath will carry it.'"

Jakes' Name Mentioned in 'Diddy' Lawsuit?

The third piece of information about the unfounded rumors involves a mention of Jakes' name in a lawsuit against Combs. For example, on March 27, 2024, Christian media outlet **The Roys Report** published the headline, "Bishop T.D. Jakes Mentioned in Lawsuit Against Sean 'Diddy' Combs."

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However, **the February 2024 complaint** against Combs mentions Jakes' name only once, and only in passing. The lawsuit did not name Jakes as a

defendant — a fact the **Austin-American Statesman** added alongside an editor's note in an update to their reporting.

The mention of Jakes' name in the complaint reads, "Mr. Combs detailing how he planned to leverage his relationship with Bishop T.D. Jakes to soften the impact on his public image" regarding R&B singer Casandra "Cassie" Ventura's **lawsuit** against Combs. In other words, the complaint mentions nothing negative about Jakes. The article from The Roys Report reveals this context.

AI-Created Videos Promote Rumors About Jakes

We found no shortage of videos promoting the false and unfounded rumors about Jakes and Combs. To keep things brief, we'll concentrate on a small sampling of videos falsely claiming Jakes stepped down from his ministry. Again, Jakes has continually participated in services at his church in the weeks following the release of these misleading videos.

On April 17, 2024, a user managing the Glamourly YouTube channel (@glamourly7) posted a new video with the title, "BREAKING: TD Jakes Stepped Down as Pastor After Being Mentioned in Diddy's Lawsuit." The video featured a **thumbnail image** falsely claiming a news anchor broadcast the supposed development for an unnamed TV outlet. The video's narration, script and editing all appeared to have been created by AI tools. The video received more than 843,000 views.

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On April 21, TikTok user Kavell Kavon (@kavellkavon) posted a **video** saying, "Due to the allegations toward 'Diddy,' we're hearing that T.D. Jakes has now stepped down as a minister." The video received more than 809,000 views.

On April 25 and 30, the **Celeb Lounge YouTube channel** — which has 347,000 subscribers — published two videos that have received around 250,000 total views. The videos feature fake, likely AI-created **thumbnail images**, with one showing Jakes and Combs both shirtless and holding hands. The narrator's voice in the video also sounded like the creation of an AI tool.

Additionally, the users managing the YouTube channels **Celebrity Glance**, **Celeb Breaker** and **Celeb Insights** published videos in early May promoting the same false rumor about Jakes' resignation. All three videos featured misleading thumbnail images. For example, the **thumbnail image** for the Celebrity Glance YouTube video falsely claimed Jakes said, "I took advantage of young boys." Some TikTok users also **reposted** some of these videos on their channels.

Additional Notes

Jakes founded The Potter's House in 1996. According to the church's **website**, 30,000 members have participated in services since then. Other than its campus in Dallas, the church features two additional Texas locations in Fort Worth and Frisco, as well as one campus in Los Angeles.

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For further reading, **NBC News** published a story on Jan. 30, 2024, about AI-generated videos promoting misinformation about Black celebrities.

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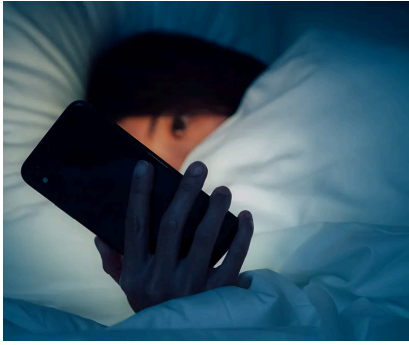
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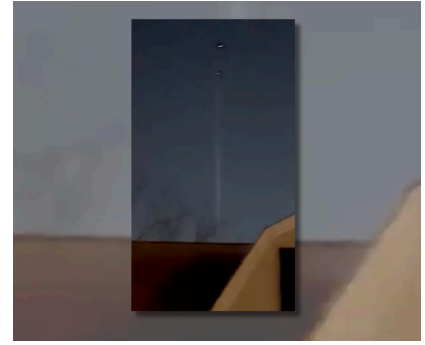
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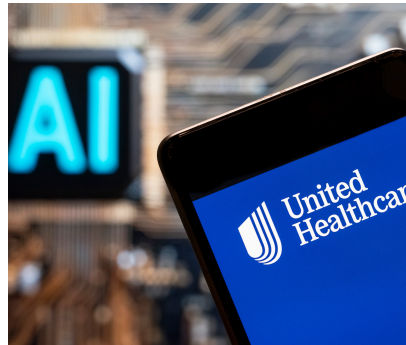
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